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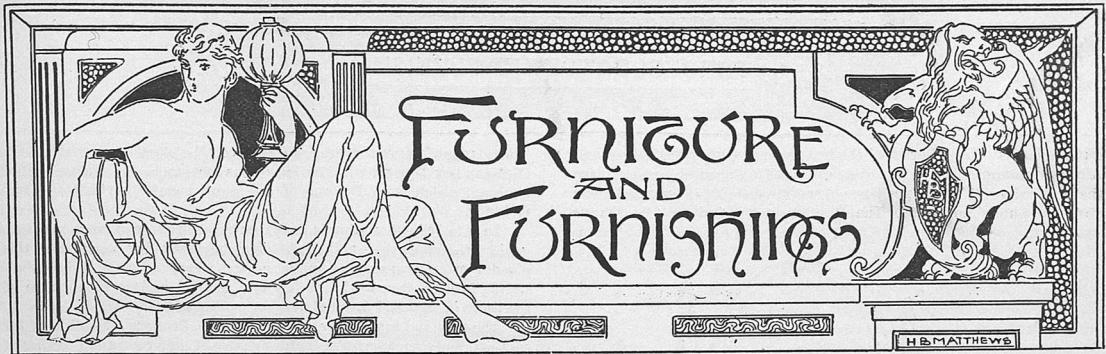
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H. B. MATTHEWS

#### SEVENTH SEMI-ANNUAL FURNITURE EXHIBITION.



**T**HIS HAS been our frequent pleasure during the past few years to introduce to our readers some of the artistic productions shown by many celebrated American furniture manufacturers at the semi-annual exhibitions held in this city, and once more we have an opportunity of examining the tasteful labors of these firms, which our readers may well regard as an exceptional privilege.

These exhibitions are established solely for trade purposes, and the public being rigidly excluded, there naturally exists a curiosity to see the many gems of the cabinet maker's art brought together in the Industrial Building, from the most widely scattered manufacturing centers, all typical of widely diversified fashions that simultaneously exist in this country, by means of which our national artistic character is being rapidly developed.

It has often been asked among architects and designers, how it is that there is nowadays no determined attempt to create distinctive American style. Why, say many patriotic and cultured people, why cannot we, with all our unparalleled opportunities and encouragement, invent a style of art which shall be proudly handed down to posterity as the "Occidental?" Why should we not introduce, at the end of this century, a style of art at least as beautiful as that which lent such a charm to the Napoleonic period in France? Why cannot we create a new mode as dainty and sympathetic as that which marked the culmination and decline of the French Renaissance at the terrible close of the eighteenth century? Why? Because of international friendliness by reason of the facilities of speedy traveling, the increase of general learning, and the gradual drifting of wealth and power from the plutocrat to the democrat, have given us unprecedented opportunities of indulging a diversified and restless taste. Our modern commerce brings, in cheap plenty, to our very doors examples of foreign art which a century or two ago were rarely if ever seen, even by wealthy folk. All these causes are, unfortunately, alluring us to lazily indulge ourselves with a luxurious and chaotic *rêchauffé* of all that the past ages have invented, and all that distant and old-fashioned nations have still to show us as quaint and novel. Thus there is now all over the world an irresistible and absolute decay of distinctly national fashions. Paris is but a few hours' journey from here, Rome but a couple of days away, while China, Egypt, Mexico and Timbuctoo are fast becoming holiday haunts of the cheap excursionist. This proximity to the Metropolis of the world, that is to say, New York; of erstwhile distant climes, is fast destroying national fashions. The Khedive's palace is largely furnished in the French style with flowered silks, huge mirrors, and gilded furniture. The Mikado's home is absolutely European in its appointments. The Rajahs and Nizams of Hindostan have for many years seared their natural tastefulness in order to indulge a vanity for glass chandeliers

and the ugly English furniture of the cabriole type. As a matter of fact, the upper classes in every land have been neglecting their traditional art and conforming their taste to European ideas, whilst Europeans have been hurrying on from one old fashion to another, gathering a little inspiration here, and there producing many transient modes, but nowhere laying the foundation of a distinctive style embodying the spirit of the time we live in.

In the United States the prevailing styles are inspired by similar styles prevalent in Europe, by embodying in their expression, in many cases, of the national character, and peculiar conditions of existence now prevalent. The busy American is avaricious of time; has no regard for tradition when it comes to a question of saving him labor or trouble. Many ingenious ideas are the outcome of the occidental spirit.

The carpet sweeper is a vast improvement on the time honored broom, and the roll-top desk is the *ne plus ultra* of business requirements. Combination furniture is the outcome of flats, born of the congested life of our large cities. But these things are away down in the scale of art furnishings, yet the spirit that animates them is gradually creeping upward until the day will come when no American manufacturer will offer for sale "absolutely correct reproductions" of foreign furniture, however artistic, or historic. Americans have been styled in Europe "the great art furnishers of the future." Let us hope our manufacturers will prove worthy of their high destiny.

#### C. H. MEDICUS & CO.



HAMLET CHAIR, BY C. H. MEDICUS & CO.

**T**HIS well-known firm gives a fine exposition of the adaptability of the French and English eighteenth century styles to American requirements. It consists of delicate and highly artistic parlor suites in the Louis XIV., Louis XV., Louis XVI. and Empire styles, and suites in the Sheraton-Chippendale styles, in both

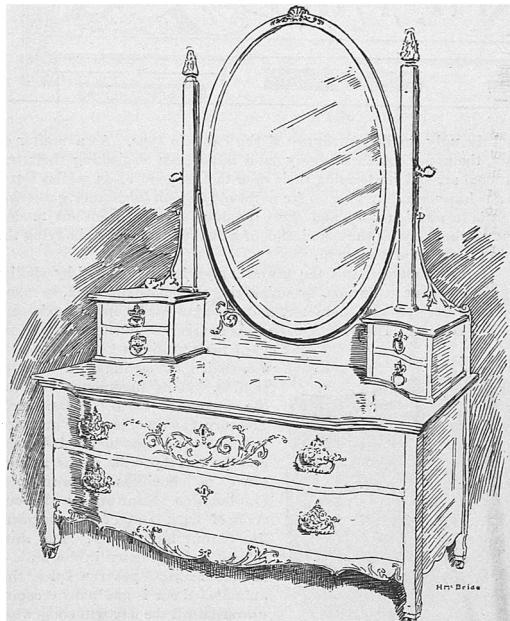
carved and inlaid mahogany and carved gilt frames beautifully upholstered in charming silk brocade. In the Empire work, marquetry is substituted for brass enrichment, by reason of its greater comfort and for the greater ease of cleaning the furniture.

What constitutes one of the chief attractions of the exhibit is a four-piece suite in Chippendale and Sheraton lines; one of the pieces being a rocker. This kind of suite will prove extremely popular. There is also shown an extremely fine line of mahogany rockers, purely American in style, whose brilliantly polished mahogany backs are discreetly decorated with marquetry designs to suit the style of panel decorated. The firm make a large line of Morris chairs, club easy chairs, and a big line of dining chairs. The display is in charge of Mr. H. Wertheimer, Jr., who was formerly with the Palmer & Embury Mfg. Co., a gentleman very well informed as to modern fine furnishings.

#### THE WILLIAMSPORT FURNITURE CO.

**T**O the general public, the difference between good and bad bedsteads is hardly perceptible, and the wretched structures which are palmed off upon the unsuspecting public, in consequence, are all too

numerous. On the other hand the bedsteads produced by some of our American manufacturers are altogether above reproach, and among the firms who rely upon excellence of workmanship to commend their goods to public notice are The Williamsport Furniture Co., manu-



DRESSING BUREAU, BY THE WILLIAMSPORT FURNITURE CO.

facturers of bedroom suites in mahogany, curly birch, bird's eye maple and white enamel and good finished suites in which splendid enrichments figure as the latest novelty. We reproduce a sketch of a magnificent toilet bureau or dresser manufactured in the now popular curly birch. The originality of the design and the technical finish of the article in question make it one of the finest productions of the modern art of furniture making, and one that is certain to command a run of popularity.

Another important section of the furniture business is their dining room furniture, the accidents of which is so well known, that to enlarge upon this point here would be superfluous. Their fine exhibit at the Exposition contains many specimens of quartered oak sideboards on French and Colonial lines with buffets to match. The designs of their furniture throughout thoroughly answer the requirements of modern trade. Long experience has taught these manufacturers just what is wanted, and in consequence thorough dependence may be placed upon their judgment.

#### JAMESTOWN LOUNGE CO.

In luxurious upholstery goods, some charming things are shown by the Jamestown Lounge Co. of Jamestown. These manufacturers have struck out on lines of their own, and have produced a series of patterns in couches and lounges quite out of the ordinary run of things. Many of their lounges have adjustable backs, and the serpentine contour of the frames, clothed in tufted French crepe or other decorative material render them most luxurious furnishings. There are couches in leather, chenille or soft Turkish goods to lie on which is to be, happily, at rest. Both the head piece as well as the body of the couch have in most cases, spring edges, a refinement to be appreciated by those who possess couches of the hard edge variety, a cheap grade that no self-respecting individual will tolerate.

These manufacturers were, we believe, the first to introduce the Ottoman box lounge, with its capacious receptacle for dresses or bed clothing, which is to day one of the most popular of bedroom furnishings.

In sofa beds, more than a dozen patterns are shown, each more ingenious than the other, and all showing the latest development of this popular space economizing appliance for weary mortals. The upholstering is of the best workmanship and quality, and is in advance of the times in new and original designs.

The easy and inviting productions of the firm are all sufficient for comfort, and are calculated, both in choice of materials and schemes of coloring to harmonize with the other furnishings of a given interior with happy effect.

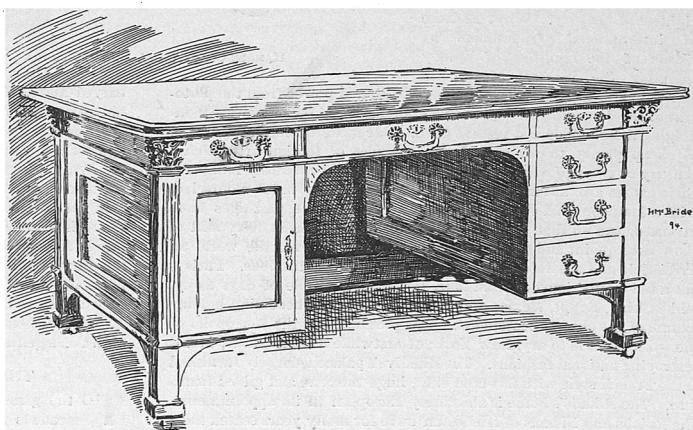
#### THE BROOKLYN CHAIR CO.

THE Brooklyn Chair Co. do not possess the maximum amount of space that is allotted exhibitors, but what they have they make good use of. They do not display their full line, but there are one hundred and twenty-five different patterns exhibited, some of the very best from various classes. One gains a good idea of what the company are doing to serve the retailers in fancy rockers, dining and reception chairs, suit chairs, etc. The company show a mahogany line of rockers with marquetry effects this season; suit chairs in numerous styles in oak, birch and white maple. Birch will be a favorite wood this season and many designs have been thought out with the single purpose of making them up in this wood. It will be a sort of specialty for the fall. A big line of cobbler and wood seat rockers are presented for approval, twenty patterns with the cobbler seat and ten with the wood seat. Cobbler chairs are made in oak, wood seats in imitation mahogany. These rockers are cheap and medium priced. For a novelty, a child's rocker with saddle seat is introduced. Messrs. Williams and Conway have expended much time and thought on the new line, and I feel sure the trade will value their efforts. At no time in the history of the Brooklyn Chair Co. have they shown goods of such general excellence.

#### THE PALMER & EMBURY MANUFACTURING CO.

To state that a particular display of furniture is characterized by artistic design and thorough workmanship is to employ a form of language that might be descriptive of a very inferior class of goods to those to which we at present refer, but in the exhibit of the above firm are shown goods of a much higher quality than the great majority of modern furniture. In reviewing a stock of this class, mere description is of little service, as the points of excellence are such as must be seen to be understood. Many of the suites are exact reproductions of historical French eighteenth century furniture, with all the suavity of line, brilliancy of carving, and luxury of covering that characterize the originals. Many pieces, while based on certain styles, are modernized in design, such as the Rococo divan represented herewith. This particular piece is in white mahogany, a superior wood, having the appearance of old ivory, the constructional enrichment being extremely decorative.

Palmer & Embury have achieved a special reputation for fine library



LIBRARY TABLE, BY THE PALMER & EMBURY MFG. CO.